

Sustaining Kansans' Commitment to Collections by a Focus on Emergency Planning

Need and Rationale

The opportunity represented by a statewide planning grant to coalesce preservation efforts among all sizes and types of collecting institutions in Kansas is a welcome prospect. Close collaboration among previously stratified cultural heritage establishments is now recognized as critical to sustaining the public's commitment to collections, in principle and in action. In view of this opportunity offered by IMLS, two preliminary meetings among representatives of Kansas cultural institutions were held, in April and July of 2008. The following institutional partners, who constitute the Planning Board for this application, contributed: State Library of Kansas (SLK), Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS), Kansas Libraries Association (KLA), Kansas Humanities Council (KHC), Kansas Arts Commission (KAC), Kansas Museums Association (KMA); University of Kansas Libraries (UKL) and K-State Libraries (KSUL). By the second meeting, a consensus developed around *emergency planning* as the highest priority for Kansas among the four recommendations in the Heritage Health Index Report, due to the frequency and severity of natural and human-disasters putting our collections at risk. In selecting emergency planning it was, however, assumed that statewide collaboration in disseminating essential preservation principles would be included, as part of planning for emergency prevention and preparedness (e.g., assessing buildings, environmental conditions, housekeeping and cleanliness). Using emergency planning as a catalyst for developing sustainable communication networks, we intend subsequently to expand to broader conversations about preservation efforts to support every cultural heritage organization in our state.

Several statewide planning and/or cooperative efforts have occurred in the past in Kansas. One that involved disaster preparedness and disaster response assistance was undertaken by the Preservation Committee of the Kansas Library Network Board in 1993. This group involved libraries and historical societies in developing the Plan for Preserving Information Resources in Kansas. They created the Kansas Disaster Recovery Assistance Network¹ (KDRAN) to promote disaster preparedness efforts and to assist in responding to disasters to protect Kansas's documentary heritage. The primary focus of the network was to provide information and a source of expertise for institutions and individuals to develop disaster preparedness measures and disaster mitigation techniques. Support for recovery efforts in the form of sources for emergency supplies, sources for emergency recovery funding, and coordination of response and recovery teams was the secondary focus of the network. *The work of KDRAN was a good starting point but it has been difficult to sustain as the individuals involved in the initial planning moved on to other positions and/or duties.*

The Kansas State Historical Records Advisory Board (KSHRAB) created its most recent plan in 2000. The document was titled *Kansas Historical Records; a Blueprint for Saving our Heritage*². The KSHRAB is scheduled to begin its update in 2009. KSHRAB

¹ Information on the project is at www.kshs.org/archives/kdran.htm

² Available online at www.kshs.org/preserve/documents/kshrab/blueprint3.pdf.

is tied to the granting arm of the National Archives and its plans focus on issues related to all types of records—governmental, business, and private— in all types of repositories. Previous plans and follow up activities have always included an educational component because of the *limited number of professional archivists in the state*.

The Kansas State Historical Society is currently involved with a project sponsored by the Council of State Archivists called Intergovernmental Preparedness for Emergency Response (IPER)³. The project is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and involves representative from State Archives, the State Emergency Management team, and state CIO's. It includes a “train the trainers” feature and then workshops will be offered across the state concerning preparedness related to state and local government records. If the IPER project mentioned above creates connections with the state emergency management network in Kansas, there is potential for some sustainability—though collections—history, art, archeology, and museum—would always come after personal safety.

To summarize, the issue of sustainability—particularly for disaster preparedness and emergency response assistance—is critical but difficult to achieve without dedicated staff supported by multiple professions and the Kansas public. Without reinforcement of the common goal through persistent collaboration across diverse collection establishments, the best of initiatives can lose energy and momentum. The overarching goal of this proposal is to consolidate that collaboration using the planning process described below.

The Planning Process

Essential Outcomes

The developers of this proposal expressed two critical issues to be addressed during the planning project, regardless of subsequent implementation projects: 1) an immediately useable but expandable *information product* for all statewide collections to employ in emergency planning, and 2) a reliable *framework for inter-institutional collaboration*, in order to grow and sustain statewide participation in preservation endeavors.

The information product will be an online Statewide Resource Guide (SRG) for emergency planning by libraries, archives, and museums of all sizes. Developed by an expert Consultant in collaboration with the project Planning Board, this SRG fulfills the following three functions: 1) aggregates the contact points and procedural knowledge already available but scattered across numerous agency and institutional websites; 2) provides a generalized model or blueprint of what goes into emergency planning, to be further customized at local institutions, and 3) offers a framework for feedback to be employed in regional workshops, conducted during the planning project to ascertain local training and resource needs.

The framework for inter-institutional collaboration is reflected in the partners that came together to develop this proposal: professional associations or societies covering the

³ Information about the project is available at www.statearchivists.org/iper/index.htm.

gamut of collecting entities across the state (Kansas Libraries Association, Kansas Humanities Council, Kansas Arts Commission, and Kansas Museums Association); major state university libraries (University of Kansas, Kansas State University); and the Kansas State Historical Society and the State Library of Kansas, cultural institutions with statewide constituencies. These partners will contribute one member each to a Planning Board for the life of this project, and subsequently, to a statewide coordinating council that collects and disseminates information among the represented collecting entities.

First, the Planning Board will work with the contracted Consultant to organize information resources for the online Statewide Resource Guide. They will then organize and promote participation in regional review workshops by a diversity of Kansas collection-holding institutions, particularly encouraging attendance by those institutions with relatively small financial resources. A professional Facilitator will be contracted to moderate, record and report on workshop participants' responses to the SRG and to questions on emergency preparedness and response. Finally, follow-up work sessions by the Consultant and Planning Board will 1) refine and update the SRG, 2) establish a permanent Collections Emergency Coordinating Council for its maintenance, and 3) produce a report with recommendations which will inform or largely constitute subsequent implementation grant applications and plans for legislative action.

Phase I April – July: Consultant and Planning Board draft the Statewide Resource Guide
Developers of this proposal solicited expertise from [WESTPAS](#) (Western States and Territories Preservation Assistance Service) for the consultancy on this project. Built from experiences gained in the California Preservation Program that united regional disaster response with preservation education, WESTPAS offers consultants who can address a diversity of rural/urban, large/small-scale cultural heritage institutions. Using <http://calpreservation.org> as a model for online information, the Consultant will work with the Planning Board to aggregate Kansas online resources on emergency planning, response, and recovery specific to museums, archives, and libraries. This first *research phase* of the planning project will take place in the first four months of the project, and will include an initial face-to-face meeting of the Planning Board with the Consultant, followed by two or three teleconference meetings. A development version of the online SRG will be hosted temporarily on the Kansas Library Association website, for review during the second, *workshop phase* of the project.

Phase II August – November: Facilitated Regional Workshops)

The Planning Board will receive assistance from the Kansas Regional Libraries System to organize regional workshops scheduled and located for optimal participation by diverse collection-holding establishments. The purpose of the workshops will be to:

1. offer the SRG as one component of a model for future statewide knowledge sharing across diverse cultural heritage establishments
2. solicit feedback on the SRG design/content and on the diverse needs of institutions for training, coordination, and other forms of support in the area of emergency planning
3. develop a shared vision of how local-to-regional emergency planning would succeed.

Developers of this proposal stress the importance of self-selection to attend these invitational workshops, while also holding to the goal of local-to-regional coordination (i.e., widespread solicitation through the associations represented in the Planning Board will be conducted, but individuals' participation should be encouraged, rather than mandated, if a vigorous critical response to the SRG is intended). All workshops will include a presentation by an expert consultant in preservation and be attended by two to three members of the Planning Board and members of the state emergency management network. Workshops will also feature a sequence of moderated groups discussions led by a professional Facilitator, and a recorder will obtain audio transcripts as well as summary notes from each proceeding. Through entire-assembly and breakout-group interactions, along with individually written surveys, data will be obtained that inform the Consultant and Planning Board of local collections' needs for emergency support and education. Particularly important will be evaluation of the SRG's statewide model for developing local emergency plans and the means of maintaining local-to-regional response networks. Participants will be asked to contribute ideas on what leadership grouping could effectively sustain progress in implementing our state's collections preservation efforts beyond emergency planning, addressing the other needs identified in the *Heritage Health Index*.

Phase III December – March: Finalizing Implementation Plans

The Consultant and Planning Board will re-convene to review the workshop data and to document an implementation plan for emergency training and support across Kansas collections, based on the priorities identified. The plan will be detailed in implementation grant proposals written during this phase, a final project report to IMLS, and reports to the Kansas Governor/Legislature. In addition, public awareness of the plan will be promoted through newspaper and newsletter articles, media interviews, and presentations at venues provided by the various organizational partners to this project. Modifications to the SRG design will be made after analyzing workshop feedback, and a permanent website will be established and publicized. Before disbanding, individuals on the Planning Board will either identify new representatives of their associations/institutions to continue under a re-organized body, a Collections Emergency Coordinating Council. Specific leadership roles will be distributed among council members (e.g., website content development and updating, grantsmanship, coordination of statewide training, and publicity). State financial support for the Council will be solicited in reports to the government and promotion of legislative action by the professional partner associations.

Project Resources

The Project Director will be Cindy Roupe, Director of Public Services for the State Library of Kansas. As a member of the Kansas Library Network Board's Preservation Committee, she maintains a centralized state collection of preservation resources. Ms. Roupe will lead the Planning Board in organizing and conducting the three phases of the project, will oversee expenditures, and will be responsible for all communications and reports to the funding agency.

The members of the Planning Board (partner representatives are named in the Budget) will also report back to their respective organizations, utilizing the relationships and facilities/abilities in those entities as building-blocks for sustaining future work beyond the planning project. Each member of the Planning Board will be active in one or two working roles (as in website content development, workshop planning, recording of notes, publicity, grant-searching, grant-writing) over the life of the project.

Julie Page, Co-coordinator of WESTPAS, has been selected as Consultant for this project. She will guide the development of the SRG so that it reflects not only the state-specific data found across other Kansas agencies, but links to useful models and resources found in other states. She will share her knowledge of emergency planning for collections preservation and help the Planning Board design the final implementation plan for subsequent grant applications. In addition two guest speakers will be featured at regional workshops. Tom Claeson, Director of New Initiatives at [PALINET](#) has over 15 years experience in preservation and digitization and is responsible for PALINET's outreach to the museum and historical society communities. Tyra Grant, Department Head of Preservation at the University of Kansas Libraries, will make a presentation at one of the regional workshops, in addition to her in-kind participation on the Planning Board. Ms. Grant has served as head of preservation at Northwestern University, Arizona State University, and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Donna Schenck-Hamlin, Library Associate with the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (ICDD) at Kansas State University, will facilitate the group discussions for the regional workshops. She combines 27 years of work in special library projects management with experience in public meeting facilitation using models such as National Issues Forums and Appreciative Inquiry. A recorder from ICDD will attend in order to capture the feedback from participants in notes and audio tapes.

The project budget requests IMLS payment for the contracts with the Consultant, Facilitator, and travel compensation for members of the Planning Board and Consultant. In addition, some materials costs are requested associated with dissemination of project results (online costs for the development website, publicity materials for workshops, printing costs for final reports). Matching support for this project by the institutions and associations is established in the budget for the workload of the Project Director and Planning Board members (the latter averaged).

The commitment of human resources to this planning project by its eight partners (Kansas Libraries Association, Kansas Humanities Council, Kansas Arts Commission, Kansas Museums Association, and Kansas State Historical Society, University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and the State Library of Kansas) demonstrates that a broad constituency for collections exists in Kansas, one that can more successfully compel state action together than any of them could separately. Substantial personnel is dedicated that, with IMLS contribution to this budget, will make an important step toward that goal.